

inside and outside private homes. Flag pins adorn lapels, flag stickers grace our cars, flag designs make for popular home decoration, and on Independence Day, our clothing often takes on the theme of Old Glory.

Clearly, we Americans love our flag and love displaying it. It is an expression of patriotism, reverence, and love of country.

From 1776 to today, from the marines who fought their way to plant the flag at the top of Iwo Jima to the firefighters who lifted the flag above the ruins of the World Trade Center, it is clear that our flag represents so much more than a nation. In truth, the American flag represents thousands of years of struggle to achieve political liberty, religious autonomy, and freedom from want. More important, our flag represents the inspiration of the life of our Nation and what humanity has the potential to accomplish.

Throughout our Nation's history, the American flag has enjoyed the protection of its people and its laws. Unfortunately, this safeguard was eroded in 1989 by the Supreme Court decision in *Texas v. Johnson*. This decision, which many of my colleagues and I agree was misguided, found within the Constitution a right that had never before existed: the right to physically assault the flag under the first amendment. Since then, Members of Congress have been faced with reconciling the tension between "free speech" and the symbolic importance of the American flag. As citizens, we can no longer allow flag burning to be considered a "norm" in our society. Although we can do nothing when terrorists or those with anti-American sentiments defile our flag abroad, we owe it to our brave service men and women, to ourselves, and to our children to do something when it happens on our own soil.

Our colleagues in the House have submitted a joint resolution to amend the Constitution to allow Congress to protect our flag. I do not take amending the Constitution lightly, but I commend the sponsoring representatives for taking action on such an important issue.

On this Flag Day, I hope we can all remember that our flag is much more than tightly woven cotton mixed with beautiful colors. It is a true symbol of the struggle of this Nation to remain free and it flies tall as a reminder to all of the liberties that we enjoy as proud citizens of this country. The respect that our flag deserves depends on us. I will close by quoting Franklin K. Lane, former Secretary of the Interior, who said this about the flag:

I am what you make me; nothing more. I swing before your eyes as a bright gleam of color, a symbol of yourself.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President. I would like to take a few moments to observe Flag Day.

Two hundred thirty years ago this week the second Continental Congress passed a resolution that created the flag of our Nation. On Flag Day we

commemorate the anniversary of this resolution and pay tribute to this honored symbol of the United States.

For every generation of Americans the flag has represented the highest ideals of our Nation, democracy, liberty, and justice. I am proud that although the number of stars has changed over the years, what our flag stands for has not.

I hope New Mexicans will take a moment today to honor the flag and all it represents.

HONORING THOMAS F. HOUSTON

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I wish to honor Thomas F. Houston for his 37 years of public service. For the past 9 years, Tom has served as the Senior Policy Advisor to the Director of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service. After almost four decades of service, he will retire this month after a career in which he served the United States in numerous capacities, including almost 20 years as a congressional staff member.

He left Mississippi in 1973 to join me on the staff of Congressman William Colmer. Tom served as Congressman Colmer's press assistant and later helped with my first campaign to replace our former boss. Tom's skill and hard work earned him a stint as deputy press secretary for the Ford-Dole Presidential campaign in 1976, and when that came to a close, Tom joined the staff of the House Committee on Government Operations, serving there until June 1989.

During his 12-year tenure on the committee, Tom had a major hand in writing a number of historical pieces of legislation, including the Inspector General Act of 1978 that first established Inspector General Offices inside Cabinet-level agencies to independently monitor their work.

In 1989, Tom left the Hill to join the George H.W. Bush administration at the Department of Defense. During the Persian Gulf buildup and war, he was the Director of the Desert Shield/Desert Storm Public Affairs Cell. That operation set the precedent for the military's public affairs policy during the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The impact of his tenure at the Pentagon is reflected in the fact that during just a 4-year period in office, Tom was twice honored by Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney with the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service.

In 1992, Tom left the administration and returned to the Hill to serve as the communications director for the first Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission. He met with potentially-affected communities and their congressional delegations to negotiate the best path forward for the transformation of the U.S. military. When the first commission began wrapping up its work, he was named Staff Director to oversee the transition to the next round.

In 1995, Tom signed on as chief of staff to Congressman JIM SAXTON of New Jersey as the second BRAC round began. Congressman SAXTON's district stood to be hit hard by the BRAC process, and Tom devoted himself to helping see the Congressman and his constituents through the duration of the second round of the process.

When it came to a close in 1996, Tom accepted an offer to serve as the chief of staff to Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON of Texas, a key member of the Senate Armed Services Committee at the time and later a member of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee.

Tom's seemingly endless devotion to his country was only surpassed by his commitment to his family. Tom decided in 1998 to step away from the Hill in order to spend more time with his children. In a move he later called "the best decision I've ever made," Tom took a job at the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, NCIS. He was recruited by NCIS Director David Brant, who charged him with overhauling the way the agency conducted its public affairs. Tom proceeded to do just that, working as head of communications for NCIS and Senior Policy Adviser to the Director to help bring about this revitalization that resulted in NCIS receiving the international recognition it enjoys today.

Tom worked tirelessly to make lasting improvements in the way NCIS approached public affairs during his tenure. Recruiting a top-notch media and congressional affairs team, he undertook an unprecedented public outreach campaign to make NCIS and its mission more widely known and better understood.

I am confident that his enormous efforts will continue to bear fruit for years to come. Perhaps the most well-known outcome of his efforts, though, has been in garnering NCIS international attention through the hit TV show "NCIS," which Tom was instrumental in bringing about. The show has earned NCIS and its employees the kind of public acclaim few in Federal Government enjoy, and through constant collaboration with the show's producers, Tom has worked to ensure the show continues to be a credit to the hard-working men and women that make up the agency.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate, honor, and thank Tom and his wife Ginger for their friendship and contributions to our country.

BUDGET RESOLUTION ADJUSTMENTS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, section 207(f) of S. Con. Res. 21, the 2008 Budget resolution, directs the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee to make appropriate adjustments in allocations, aggregates, discretionary spending limits, and other levels of new budget authority and outlays to reflect the difference between the budgetary impact